

If the issue is not corrected by the store, please contact the Department of Consumer Protection at (860) 713-6160 for additional assistance.

We also encourage you to download and complete a complaint form by visiting our website at:

www.ct.gov/dcp

Select "Complaints" from the left menu and follow the instructions to locate, complete, and submit the form to us.

Department of Consumer Protection 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106 1.860.713.6110 www.ct.gov/dcp

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION

Fact Sheet

PRICE SCANNING

Know The Law!



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Today, nearly all retailers have installed electronic devices at their checkout counters that “scan” the UPC bar codes on each item.

This enables the cashier to total your purchase faster, and helps the store keep track of the items and quantities being sold.

However, consumers often question whether the scanned prices are accurate, particularly on sale items.

Connecticut law offers relief to consumers who believe they were incorrectly charged for items they have purchased.

What Happens if the Scanned Price isn't Accurate?

Consumers often wonder whether the prices scanned at the register are accurate compared to the prices advertised in the store's circular, the price tags on the items themselves, or the signs on the store shelves.

The law allows stores to price their merchandise individually with labels, or to use Universal Product Coding (UPC) to scan item prices and tally customers' purchases at the register. If the store chooses to use UPC pricing, it must be approved by, and registered with, the Department of Consumer Protection. Once approved and registered, the store is responsible for maintaining the accuracy of its scanning system. The Department of Consumer Protection routinely inspects and tests store scanners in Connecticut.

While today's improved technology allows stores to quickly and efficiently change their scan prices to match their advertised prices, mistakes and oversights do occasionally occur, so it is important for you to know your legal rights in the event of inaccurate scanning.

The “Get One Free” Law

If an item scans higher at checkout than the price posted on the item or the shelf, you are entitled to that item at no cost. As of October 2006, State law requires the retailer to give an item free to a consumer, up to a value of \$20, if it scans at a price higher than the posted price.

If the product scans **lower** than the posted price you do not get the item free, but you are entitled to buy the item at the lower, scanned price.

The disputed item must be a “consumer commodity” -- a food, drug, device, cosmetics or other item produced for consumers, that gets “used up” or depleted over time and is meant to be regularly replaced. For example, a carton of milk or a package of trash bags are consumer commodities; when you run out of these, you buy more. A hair brush or a plastic trash can are not commodities; they may wear out, but they don't get “used up” in the same way.

When an item scans at a higher price than is posted or marked, **point it out to the cashier immediately and ask** for that item to be provided free of charge. If necessary, speak to the store manager.

If a consumer commodity item costing more than \$20 scans incorrectly, you still have some recourse. After pointing it out to the cashier, you are entitled to a \$20 credit off your total purchase at the register.